

# Summary

## Work-Life Balance, Work-Family Conflict, and Work-Life Enrichment: A Theoretical Review

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Work-life balance initiatives were introduced by various organizations in the 1980s, and Kellogg's flexible four 6-hour shifts in the 1990s solidified the concept (Dizaho & Othman, 2013). The post-pandemic era saw increased usage of hybrid and remote work methods, which elevated work-life balance as a prominent concern (SIOP, 2023).

This article examines numerous studies, definitions, theoretical approaches, determinants, and outcomes related to work-life balance, categorizing them primarily into two main areas: work-family conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) and work-family enrichment (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Work-family conflict refers to a situation where work-life balance is absent, while work-family enrichment is seen as the mutual enhancement of both domains. The initial relationship between work and non-work life was conceptualized as "work-life conflict" by Kahn (1964) referring to the conflict and adverse effects of the roles in the two areas (Vatansever, 2010). Early research explored the negative aspects of the "work-life" relationship. Later, there was an expansion in the scope of studies in this field, shifting from a focus on negative features to an emphasis on positive aspects. This approach provided a more balanced perspective by concentrating on the positive effects of integrating work and family roles (Barnett, 1998; Frone, 2003; Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999).

While there is consensus in the literature regarding the benefits of work-life balance for individuals and organizations, there are various definitions of the concept. Understanding the concept of work-life balance is vital in guiding policymakers and businesses in formulating evidence-based strategies. The present article will enhance the reader's understanding of the concept of work-life balance and its significance, applications, and effects. The current article will also contribute to a better understanding of the global context of this concept by evaluating work-life balance research conducted in Turkey along with the international literature. This article will encourage further research in this area and offer

guidance to practitioners such as industrial/organizational psychologists, business executives/managers, and human resource specialists.

### Work-life Balance

Defining work-life balance is a complex task. The complexity arises from the different meanings of "work" and "life." "Work" includes paid employment, unpaid hours, commuting, and remote work, while "life" extends beyond family life to various aspects of one's existence (Guest, 2002). Despite the complexity, the scholarly literature shows some consensus on the definition of work-life balance as achieving a subjective sense of equilibrium between work and non-work domains (Guest, 2002; Aycan, 2010). This subjective evaluation varies among individuals and across generations, making work-life balance an evolving concept (Kohll, 2018).

The antecedents of work-life balance encompass several key work-related factors including the level of commitment demonstrated by top management, work hours and schedule structure, availability of leaves, holidays, and career breaks, as well as considerations related to an individual's personal life and responsibilities (Dizaho & Othman, 2013), and demands of both work and home, and individual factors such as work orientation, personality, and energy (Guest, 2002). Achieving work-life balance has been associated with favourable outcomes such as enhanced employee productivity, increased satisfaction, and higher levels of engagement (Dizaho & Othman, 2013). Work-life balance is characterized by low levels of role conflict and high levels of role enrichment in both work and non-work domains (Frone, 2003; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Sirgy & Lee, 2018).

**Antecedents of Work-Family Conflict** Considerable research (see Allen et al., 2012 and Michel et al., 2010 for discussion) showed that personality traits significantly influenced work-family conflict dynamics. Negative attributes like negative affect and neuroticism increased susceptibility to work-family conflict, while pos-

itive traits like positive affect, internal locus of control, self-efficacy, and optimism acted as protective factors. Additionally, traits such as agreeableness and conscientiousness contributed positively to reducing work-family conflict. Considering employees' personality traits in the context of work and family is essential. Michel et al. (2010) emphasized the significance of factors that affected work-family balance and mitigated work-family conflict. Key determinants are job stressors, role conflict, role ambiguity, overload, and time demands. Social support in both work and family contexts is crucial to alleviate work-family and family-work conflicts.

**Outcomes of Work-Family Conflict** The literature categorizes the consequences of work-family conflict into three domains: individual, attitudinal, and behavioral. Regarding individual outcomes, a considerable number of studies showed that work-family conflict negatively affected an individual's physical health and psychological well-being, leading to increased stress-related health issues (Allen et al., 2000; Amstad et al., 2011; Frone, 2000; Geurts et al., 1999). Regarding attitudinal consequences, employees experiencing significant work-family conflict exhibited reduced dedication to their work (Allen et al., 2000; Bruck et al., 2000; Kossek & Özeki, 1998), diminished satisfaction with their jobs (Allen et al., 2000, 2020; Amstad et al., 2011; Bruck et al., 2002; Kossek & Özeki, 1998), a decline in their overall contentment with life (Allen et al., 2000, 2020; Amstad et al., 2011; Kossek & Özeki, 1998), and an inclination toward considering leaving their current employment (Allen et al., 2000; Yıldız et al., 2021). Turning to behavioral consequences, research demonstrated that work-family conflict significantly affected various aspects of employees' behaviour including job performance (Allen et al., 2000; Amstad et al., 2011) and absenteeism (Amstad et al., 2011). Moreover, the literature indicates that job stress, job support, and job involvement influenced the degree of family satisfaction (Ford et al., 2007).

Additionally, the literature highlights a noteworthy finding of a positive reciprocal relationship between work-family and family-work conflicts. This indicates that difficulties experienced in the work domain can spill over and affect family life, and vice versa, creating a complex interplay between the two domains that warrants consideration in understanding the broader implications of work-family conflict (Frone et al., 1992; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

#### **Antecedents of Work-Family Enrichment**

Work-family enrichment refers to instances where individuals' accomplishments and positive experiences in the workplace positively influence their family life or when nurturing and gratifying family relationships

contribute to enhanced work performance (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). This phenomenon entails the transfer of a diverse set of skills from one domain to another such as a father who, in caring for a single-parent child, assimilates new parenting skills like compassion and patience which he then applies in his work environment. Similarly, the same father might utilize time management skills honed at work while teaching his son mathematics. The first is an example of family-work enrichment, and the latter is work-life enrichment. Both play significant roles in fostering work-life balance.

Regarding the antecedents of work-family enrichment, Lapierre et al. (2018) conducted a meta-analytic study which explored the relationship between enrichment and various contextual and personal characteristics. While the relationship between work-related variables is stronger for work-family enrichment and family-related variables are stronger for family-work enrichment, many variables exhibit a bidirectional relationship. The research findings highlight the crucial role of support in promoting enrichment between the work and family domains. These findings align with theoretical models proposed by Greenhaus and Powell (2006) and Wayne et al. (2007) which emphasized the significance of support in enriching both work and family domains.

Moreover, Lapierre and colleagues (2018) pointed out that certain job-related personal characteristics such as work engagement, job centrality, and work passion play significant roles in supporting employees' experiences of enrichment between their work and family lives.

**Outcomes of Work-Family Enrichment** Regarding the outcomes of work-family enrichment and family-work enrichment, a separate meta-analytic study by McNall et al. (2010) provides insights. The study revealed that work-family enrichment and family-work enrichment have positive outcomes. Both are significantly related to job satisfaction, affective commitment, and family satisfaction. The results support Greenhaus and Powell's (2006) model of the work-family enrichment process, showing that as work-family enrichment increases, job satisfaction and emotional attachment to the organization also increase.

#### **The relationship between work-life balance and the concepts of work-family conflict and work-family enrichment**

Work-life balance refers to the harmonious alignment of different roles in an individual encompassing both work and personal aspects tailored to each individual's circumstance (Guest, 2002; Greenhaus et al., 2003). Conversely, work-family conflict arises when individuals experience incompatible demands from their job and family, making it challenging to fulfil one role without negatively influencing the other (Clark, 2000).

Work-family enrichment refers to the positive experiences and accomplishments in a specific role that positively impacts and enhances the overall quality of life in the other (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Both work-family conflict and work-family enrichment are pivotal factors influencing work-life balance, and they are, of course, interrelated. Work-life balance seeks equilibrium by reducing work-family conflict while fostering work-family enrichment, thereby facilitating employee satisfaction and accomplishments in both professional and familial domains. Work-family conflict occurs when work-related demands negatively affect family life or when familial responsibilities impede work performance exerting a detrimental influence on work-life balance (Carlson et al., 2009).

### Conclusion

Achieving work-life balance is crucial for both employees and employers, with numerous positive effects including improved physical and mental health, job satisfaction and performance, family satisfaction, and work-related commitment.

Recognizing the intricate relationship between work-family conflict and work-family enrichment is essential for shaping work-life balance. Work-life balance seeks equilibrium by minimizing work-family conflict while promoting work-family enrichment, thereby facilitating employee satisfaction and accomplishments in both professional and familial domains.

Moreover, organizations have a significant role to play in this endeavor. Work-related antecedents such as level of commitment by top management, work hours, schedule structure, and availability of leaves serve as potential avenues for organizations to proactively enhance work-life balance.

### Discussion

Considering the review findings regarding work-related antecedents, organizations can implement targeted programs aimed at enhancing employee awareness regarding the importance of maintaining a healthy work-family balance. For instance, the findings of a meta-analysis conducted by Michel et al. (2010) revealed a weak yet positive association between work-family conflict and task variety (i.e., the extent to which a job requires an individual to perform a wide range of tasks). This implies that employees with greater task variety may experience increased conflict between their work and personal lives, potentially due to challenges in balancing various tasks and managing their time effectively. However, studies indicate negative relationships between

work autonomy and work-family conflict (Michel et al., 2010), and positive relationships between work-family enrichment and autonomy (Lapierre et al., 2018). Early investigators emphasized the negative aspects of the work experience, now human resources management, organizational behaviour, and psychology experts argue that work can be a satisfying, motivating, and self-fulfilling experience (Bromley et al., 2021; Deijl, 2022), and autonomy is an important factor in predicting meaningful work (Martela et al., 2021) and work-life balance.

Furthermore, empirical studies have revealed pertinent associations between work-family-friendly organizational practices and various dimensions of work-family dynamics. Michel et al. (2010) observed a negative correlation between work-family-friendly organizations and work-family conflict, while Lapierre et al. (2018) reported a positive relationship between such policies and work-family enrichment. Michel et al. (2010) also highlighted the link between work-family-friendly organizations and the significant reduction of family-work conflict. These findings collectively underscore the significance of work-family-friendly initiatives in mitigating work-family conflict experienced by employees.

Positive correlations between work-family enrichment and family-work enrichment underscore the significance of supporting work-life balance for employee well-being and satisfaction. Further research in this area can benefit human resources practitioners enabling them to devise effective policies and provide support.

Research investigating the moderating impact of gender on relationships between work-family conflict (Allen et al., 2012) and work-family enrichment and family-work enrichment (Lapierre et al., 2018) has not yielded strong evidence. Researchers should explore the influence of gender and other demographic factors on work-life balance, offering insights for the development of effective inclusion strategies (SIOP, 2023). Understanding the relationship between demographic variables and work-life balance will help organizations promote a more inclusive work environment.

The review's findings stress the importance of work-life balance for both employees and employers. It is important to note, however, that utilizing the same term, "work-life balance," across cultures may lead to the misconception that the concept is culture-independent (Lewis et al., 2007). This may not be true and employing a "one-size-fits-all" approach for work-life balance techniques in varied cultural contexts may not produce the best results (Chandra, 2012; Vyas, 2022). Instead, a more customized approach may be required to adequately satisfy individual, work-related, and cultural needs.